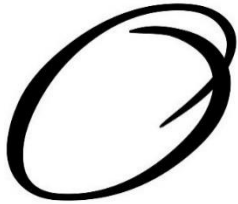


ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD!

Michael C. Garrett

11/8/08



On Thursday I went to a place I'd never seen before! A very historic place. *Dealey Plaza* down in downtown Dallas, and the [Sixth Floor Museum](#). Almost forty-five years after that tragedy happened, and I was not prepared for the overwhelming sadness that I was to feel. I had no idea it would affect me so. I was thirteen years of age back in that November 22, 1963, when we heard about [John F. Kennedy](#) being shot – I was coming back from a PE class, walking up the hill, and some of my buddies was saying, “The president’s been shot! The president’s been shot!” And I thought they were just kidding or joking. Back in my homeroom, Mrs. Weyerman, and she had the radio on from the office, and sure enough, the president had died. Had been shot, and then a short time later, we were officially told that he died. Forty-five years later I’m still overwhelmed by how much that profoundly affected the history of the United States! Without, there may not have been a Vietnam. Because there was rumors that Kennedy was going to pull out of Vietnam. And, it was only [Lyndon Johnson](#) who, sort-of, picked up the flag and wanted to overblow on steroids – and you know what we got! We got about a decade and a half of turmoil that ripped this country apart. And to this day, those rips and tears have not been mended – and it altered the history of our country beyond measure! I just don’t know if we really realize just how much that affected us!?

On Friday, you’ll be happy to know, that I went to the [Ft. Worth Stockyards](#). Quite a little place to visit. How many of you have visited that before? Raise your hands. And what really surprised me, my Dad was with me, and there on the grounds is a building they call the Cowtown Coliseum, and now they hold rodeos there on Friday nights and Saturday nights. They have had big shows there – Bob Hope, and Elvis, and [Enrico Caruso](#). That was about Tony’s time, I think! That was way back then, when Enrico Caruso was singing!

But anyway, they put up the building in the early 1900s, and when we were walking in, my Dad said, “Well, you know I brought your Mother,” before they were married, “here one time!” And that just, sort-of, shocked me to no-end! And he knew right where they had sat, and they were with some friends. My Dad was stationed at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls. Mom was a teacher and lived in Olney, Texas, up in Archer County. How many of you know where Archer County is? Throckmorton, and there’s another town over there, anyway forget it – it’s over there. And so, Olney, and Dad and Mom had met there! And, so, that big o’ building played a part of me being me! ‘Cause had the rodeo gone bad, Fred Jones would be up here talking to ya! So, anyway it was most enjoyable and interesting! ...

Well my opening comment here is sort-of an editorial. And it starts out, “Well, well, well! It’s finally over!” And almost two-dozen months of high-powered presidential election hearing, we finally have a winner! And some in this audience, and those of the television program, may be euphoric, while others may be despondent and depressed. And we do not know how our new president and his



Barack Hussein Obama II, served as the 44th President of the United States from 2009 - 2017. With Vice President Joe Biden back left.

administration will do. Only 52% of the American people gave him their vote! And there are reasons that 48% of the American people voted for the other candidate. And yet, the people have spoken, and what will be will be. And of late, I have often thought of the old adage: Be careful what you ask for, because you may just get it! And in this case, we have CHANGE a-comin’! But we don’t know what type of change, do we!? But Mark talked about *that* earlier – I’ll get off that subject. And with total sincerity, I hope and pray that our new president does a good job, for your sakes, for my sake, for the sake of our friends and loved ones, and for the sake of our country and her future. I do hope and pray that he does well.

But in the aftermath of the presidential election I think there are some words of wisdom that all of us should contemplate. In Romans chapter 13, Paul wrote something, you who have their Bibles might want to turn there. **Romans chapter 13, verses 1 & 3** – “Let every soul [life] be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. **2)** Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.” – keep in mind, Paul lived during the Roman Empire. A pretty tough time to raise your voice and to protest. Or to be unhappy. But he also went on to say, **Verse 3** - “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil.” – and he continued, “Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.” – ‘rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil.’ So do good, do well, and Paul tells us that we will have no problems. And foremost let us remember and consider the words that the psalmist wrote back in Psalm 118 – I don’t know if King David wrote this, or another individual, but it’s **Psalm 118, verses 8 & 9** – and this is something that *all* of our nation, I think, should keep in mind – “It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in man. **9)** It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in princes.” – and so I say to all of you, put your trust in God in the coming days, months, and years! And Paul in **Philippians chapter 3** wrote the following – **Verse 20** – “For our citizenship [that’s how it should be rendered] is in Heaven, from which we eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21)** who will transform our [vile] body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, ...” And then the Words of Jesus Christ – maybe this sums it up best of all – **Matthew chapter 6, verse 10** – **“Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in Heaven.”** And maybe in the end, that’s where all of us should be thinking!? Because I don’t think human beings are going to solve the problems of *this* world – and as we know, we haven’t seen anything yet – in terms of problems! They’re out there on the horizon like a giant storm on The Gulf waiting to come ashore and to rip apart everything that appears to be civilized.

Well, now that that little editorial is over, I’ll go into another thought process.

O’ about in the early ‘80s, I had a friend out in Arizona by the name of Rick Carlson, and he was a basketball coach and teacher. And he went to church – just basically caddy cornered from where I live. No more than about 120 feet.

If you had a good arm, you could easily pick up a baseball and throw it into the front yard of that building. And one Wednesday night, Rick was there attending, and then he came over and said hello to me – I was outside in my front yard watering my plants. And I said, “Rick, I see that you just went to church tonight. What did you learn!?” “Well, we were studying faith,” said Rick. I said, “Well, that’s a good topic. What is faith!?” And, Rick looked at me, and he looked a little puzzled, and then he quoted verbatim **Hebrews chapter 11, verse 1** – and I was very impressed with Rick’s memory. He said, “Well faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” And he sort of clicked his heels when he said that, like – ‘there, I told ya!’ And I said, “Rick, what does *that* mean!?” He said, “Well, it means faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” And I said, “Well, Rick, I gotta tell you the truth, I read that and I really don’t know what it means. I know it sounds good, but I don’t know what it means.” But I said, “Rick, if you’ll go down to verse 6, I think you’ll get a much better illustration of what Paul had in mind when he decided to talk about faith.” And in **Verse 6** it says, “But *without* faith it is impossible to please Him ...” – now, whoa, that’s big! Without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please God! “for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” – and that does a much better job – although there’s another definition that I think does even better.

Romans chapter 4, verse 3 – we read a statement from the Book of Genesis, that is repeated several times throughout the New Testament. Paul quotes it twice, and James quoted it once. “For what does the Scripture say? ‘*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted [or imputed] to him for righteousness.*’ 4) Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. 5) But to him who does not work ...” – now this word “*works*,” we’re going to read several times in these passages. I don’t want to spend too much time about it, but I just feel compelled to say some things. So, throughout here we’re going to read the word “*works*,” or “*the law*,” or the “*work of the law*.” You’ve got to understand that Paul is talking about the law of the regulations of the Levitical Priesthood, or sometimes called the Law of Moses. And I like to call it just the law or the traditions of Jewish-ness – Jewish traditions.

He says in **Verse 5** – “But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith, is accounted for righteousness, **6**) just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness APART FROM WORKS: **7**) *‘Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; 8) *Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.’*” – I’ve had friends who are in the church, who tell me they still struggle with things they did when they were very young. Teenagers or in their 20s. And, quite frankly, a lot of people when they’re teenagers and in their early 20s do things that aren’t very smart. And I try to tell those people – read *that* verse ‘Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered.’ And if you’ve gone to God and asked for forgiveness, those problems of your past are gone! And you need to BELIEVE that and understand it and take great hope in it! Well, if you go a little farther up to **Verse 13** – “For the promise [we’re talking about Abraham] that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed THROUGH THE LAW, ...” again we hear this phrase ‘the law.’ “but through the righteousness of faith.” **Verse 14** – “For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, **15**) because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.” – so, over, and over again – *the law, the law, the law*. And I want you to understand, he wasn’t talking about the Ten Commandments. He’s talking about Jewish traditions – as taught by the Pharisees. And, in fact, Paul spent his entire ministry fighting badly – sometimes to the point of them trying to kill him. And, I think, one time he was killed, that’s just my personal view. And God ‘raised’ him back up! Because He wasn’t through with Paul. And, Paul spent his entire ministry fighting Jewish leaders who were trying to bring the New Testament Church members to make them adopt Jewish traditions. And you can read about some of these warnings that Paul had over and over.*

In **Titus chapter 1, verse 10** – “For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, **11**) whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert WHOLE HOUSEHOLDS, teaching things which they ought not, ...” **Verse 13** – “...Therefore REBUKE THEM SHARPLY, that they may be sound in the faith, **14**) not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men who turn from the truth.” **Verse 16** – “They profess to know God, BUT IN WORKS they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.”

And then in Colossians chapter 2 – there’s a verse there which has confused an awful lot of folks. And, sometimes on Sunday morning, you’ll see some hyperventilating Protestant – I have a buddy back there in Kentucky who calls them that ... they make a sucking sound... I can’t even do it... But **Colossians chapter 2, verse 4** – “Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.” **Verse 8** – “BEWARE lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men [think Jewish traditions right there!], according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.” **Verse 13** – “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He [Jesus Christ] has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” – so, here we come to **Verse 14**. This is the verse that, for some reason, Protestant ministers want to say that God, somehow, did away with the Ten Commandments. Well, He did no such thing! He was the One that instituted them – Jesus Christ is the One that gave Moses the *Ten* Commandments! And, Jesus Christ is the One who taught Paul. But Paul was trying to get across this idea of the teachings of the Levitical Priesthood, or the modern-day remnants back in his time. He said, “having wiped out the hand writing of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” And there’s been many one of those Sunday morning preachers that said that somehow Jesus Christ, “took the Ten Commandments and NAILED it to His cross!” “The Law is GONE!” And they just totally screwed up! Because he wasn’t talking about the Ten Commandments, he was talking about the old Levitical Priesthood ways – the Jewish traditions that flooded that culture. And with which Paul had to deal with time after time. Notice **Verse 20** – “Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations [think Jewish regulations, traditions!] – **21**) ‘Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,’ **22**) which all concern things which perish with the using – according to the commandments and doctrines of men?”

Well, Jesus Christ, also WARNED against Jewish traditions! Mark chapter 7 – I’ve read this before at different times, but, there’s a reason I’m going through this, I’ll explain it in just a moment.

Mark chapter 7, verse 6 – “...’Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: *‘This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 7) And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ 8) For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men* [and then He names a few] – *the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other things you do.*” – these little physical



A Catholic nun wearing a cross and a habit.

activities that the Jewish people obsessed with. Jesus Christ said don't go there!! And, in *this* world today, there are a lot of religious people who are infatuated with little physical things. People who wear crosses. Why do they do that!? Because they want – *notice me!* “I'm of Christ,” they say. The people who wear their long robes. The women who wear their habit as they walk down the street. I remember as a boy watching three or four nuns walking up the street from about a block or two away from the Catholic church. And we always called them, quite irreverently, “Penguins.” Well, just a bunch of children talking, but, *that look* – O' you're supposed to go, “This lady is holy.” Because of what she has on. This physical aspect. Or, this man... he's got his collar on backwards! Therefore he's holy!? Or, he's got a robe on, therefore he's holy!? All of these little physical manifestations which are to “prove” – “I'm of God!” *notice me!* Yet, Jesus Christ, He said down in **Verse 13** – “*making the Word of God of no*

effect through your tradition ...”

And so, I have tried to talk about being careful about getting absorbed into Jewish traditions, despite all of these Biblical warnings that we've read – and I've just pulled a few. There are some people – in this era of time – who was once associated with the Worldwide Church of God, or some of its former members, who have this powerful urge – almost like a giant magnet – to adopt Jewish traditions. I'm gonna name a few situations and which I have personally witnessed or with which I've had to deal.

There one time was a lady in Paducah – I went to Dr. Rick’s church down in Paducah this many years ago – and it was Summer time, it had to have been about 97 degrees and 98 percent humidity. It was a horrible day to be outside. And this lady lived about two or three miles away. She was sitting next to me, aged and feeble. And after church I offered her for a ride home. Because I just didn’t think she needed to be walking two or three more miles. And she says, “No. O’ no. I don’t ride in a car on the Sabbath!” And you go, why are you doing this!?

One time I baptized two men up in Indiana – I was sort-of baptism by hire. I had never met them, I was simply told to go somewhere and meet them and baptize them. And after they were baptized – now one of them really gave me a start, because after we dunked him, he started doing back strokes in the pool. I had some real misgivings at that point! But anyway, we got up into the room where we were changing, and I saw that two of these guys put on [Stars of David](#). And that shocked me! So I just strolled over there and said, “Fellas, why are you wearing these necklaces with Star of David?” One of these men looked like he could possibly have been Jewish, but the other man was straight from Liverpool, and he was just English through and through. And the one guy, who had done the backstrokes, said, “Well don’t we all want to be Jewish!?” And I said, “Well, not me, I desire to be Christian!” But they thought that by wearing the Star of David was somehow an emblem they need to wear to announce their faith. And, I never did figure that one out! And, by the way, those two men ended up getting into an argument over their mailbox – “Your mailbox is on my land!” They got to the point at one time where they weren’t even speaking to one other.

I have noticed in a crowd where Mr. Ted was speaking, a man wearing a prayer shawl and a Yarmulke – I betcha Mark remembers that one. He asked the man to move away from the camera.

I’ve heard about a group down in Tennessee, who, the leaders at one time, use to wear these little skirts that – I was told was called Tzitz; I know nothing about them. If you have more knowledge, come and tell me. But these guys would wear their little skirts, and they would sort-of walk around – “My skirts bigger than yours!” And proud of *this* – this silly custom!

You all have heard about people who get sucked up into the idea of sacred names. That we somehow have to speak Hebrew in order for God to hear us, and yet, I fell off a roof one time and all I had time to say is, “Father, help.” And He, I think, saved my life! So, I *know* God hears English! I understand *that*!

I know people who want to get into the idea of the New Moons. And I asked this man, “Well what do you gotta do!?” And he said, “I don’t know, but we’re just gonna keep the New Moons.” Just goofy ideas.

People have gotten all bugged eyed about eating out on the Sabbath, even though Jesus Christ and His disciples went through the corn field, the wheat field, just eating away! Didn’t seem to bother them! And again, if you don’t wanna eat out on the Sabbath, just close your briefcase after church, smile, say hi to everyone and just quietly go home. Don’t make a big dramatic deal over it. But, people get onto these little ideas, and they sort-of want to push everybody else into them!

I’ve heard over and over again – year after year – people who get into debates over The Passover! And they all want to argue about somehow – well, the Jews did it *this* way or *that* way – and they just get all confused and they want to get other people confused. And, I just recently heard of *another time* when that has gotten people wound up. Mark is all the time having to deal with – as his Dad did before him.

Then I heard of another group who – a man was not circumcised. This is a group who is sort-of descended from the Worldwide Church of God. And the minister there said, “Well, before you can take The Passover, you have to be circumcised!” How can you read the New Testament and the writings of Paul and *not* understand!? THAT IS OVER!! And yet, the man, after a year wait finally succumbed to his ministers pressure. And at age fifty-six or something became circumcised.

I remember back in Ambassador College, a number of students would go over to Jerusalem, in what they called the “Big Dig.” I’m sure a couple of people in here remember *that*. And one year a group of people – that I knew – went over there, and when they came back, they were all wearing Yarmulke’s. And then gathering on Friday nights to do Jewish dances! They acted as though they were becoming Jewish! Ambassador College students.

And you just go – how can people get so distracted from what the Bible plainly says!?

And, there are now people – that I know of - one congregation has taken a pretty good hit over people who have left the Church of God and started attending Messianic Jews! Or Jewish religion, whatever they call it! Again, this urge to go back to Jewish-ism!

Well, as I said to Owensboro, a week or two ago – if anybody ever comes to you with *this* idea R U N! Get in your car, your truck, your motorcycle, your snowmobile, your pogo stick, your skateboard, whatever you've got for transportation, and just go as fast as you can the other direction! Because these people are plotting to destroy you! They don't know it. They think they're doing good, but in actuality they're doing abominable things! And turning people away from Jesus Christ!



Well, let's go back to **Romans chapter 4** – we were talking about Abraham. **Verse 18** – Abraham, “who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, *‘So shall your descendants be,’*” – back in Genesis. **Verse 19** – “And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead [meaning he was an old man] (since he was about a

hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.” – so they're both well advanced in age. And God has told him, ‘You're gonna have a son!’ Well, notice **Verse 20** – “He did not waver at the promise of God, through unbelief, but was [strong] in faith, giving glory to God,” – and here's verse 21, if you have a little marker on you, please mark **Verse 21** – in my opinion is the very best definition in the entire Bible of what faith is. I once spoke behind a man at the Feast of Tabernacles, he spent forty-five minutes telling people what faith was *not*. “Well, faith is not this! And faith is not that!” And he went on and on and on. And when he finished, I said, “Well, what is it!?”

Well, he never said. He should have turned to **Romans chapter 4, verse 21** – this is the best definition of faith you’re ever gonna read! **Abraham “and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.”** – so faith is believing in the promises of God. So, in order to believe the promises of God, you’ve got to believe that He *is*, you have to believe that the Bible is His Word, and then you have to *study* this Book! And then you study these promises that God makes to you! And in your prayer you need to go to God and say, “You have told me from Your Word that this is what You will do. And I believe You! And I put my life into Your hands!” And notice in **Verse 22** – “And therefore *‘it was [imputed] to him for righteousness.’*” **Verse 23** – “Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, **24**) but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, **25**) who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.” – that’s why we have *this* Savior, He came out of the tomb. Notice **chapter 5, verse 10** – “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” – and the fact that Jesus Christ walked out of a tomb after He had been dead for three days – and He was stone-cold DEAD!! He was raised back to LIFE! And He sat an example – the *first* of the firstfruits. That we also, someday – if we have died between now and the Return of Jesus Christ – that we too will walk out of that grave *at the blowing of the SEVENTH TRUMP!!* And, if we are still alive, we will join in the crowd. And *this* is something that we have to know, and WE HAVE TO BELIEVE!!! And it’s MORE IMPORTANT than what happened this past week. Which is truly an historic occasion! And we’ll have ramifications beyond our wildest dreams! As we go down in the future months and years.

Well, what were those promises!? We get a little bit of clue – let’s turn back to **Galatians chapter 3**. Because there Paul talks about this same verse again. Notice **Verse 6** – “[J]ust as Abraham *‘believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’*” – Notice **Verse 18** – “For if the inheritance is of the law [meaning, the Jewish customs], it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.” And he says in **Verse 21** – “Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. **22**) But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”

Verse 23 – “But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.” Notice **Verse 24** – this is a very famous verse, you hear it quite often – “Therefore the law [these Jewish customs] was our [school master] to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. **25**) But after faith has come, we are NO LONGER under a [school master]. **26**) For you are all [children] of God through faith in Christ Jesus. **27**) For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **28**) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither [bond] nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **29**) And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to *the promise*.” And, what was *that* promise!? **Romans chapter 4, verse 13** – we read it – “For the promise that he would be the HEIR OF THE WORLD ...” That promise was made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. And *that* promise was also made to all of us!

Hebrews chapter 9, verse 15 – “...that those who are called may receive the promise of the ETERNAL INHERITANCE.” That’s another one of those promises that God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – and by extension, He gave it to all of us! **Hebrews chapter 9, verse 24** – “For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God *for us*.” – you know, all throughout the Book of Hebrews, we’re told that we have this great High Priest who sits on the right-hand side of God. And that He is our Advocate, our Intercessor. And there are times in our life when we have gone astray, and maybe Satan and his demons are *there* just laughing and carrying on to no extent. And then Jesus Christ walks up and says, “Father, I have forgiven them. And they belong to Me. End this.” I wonder how many times Jesus Christ has had to come to our defense to say, “I shed My blood, that they might be forgiven, and that someday they might live for all eternity”!? He goes on to say, **Verse 25** – “[N]ot that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another – **26**) He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, ONCE at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of HIMSELF.”

Verse 27 – “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, **28**) so Christ was offered ONCE to bear the sins of many. TO THOSE WHO EAGERLY WAIT FOR HIM ...” – you remember Jesus in the

Book of Luke, ‘LOOK UP AND BEHOLD YOUR SALVATION!’ ‘THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE **ON E A R T H** AS IT IS IN HEAVEN!’ We are to look for the returning KINGDOM OF GOD! And that’s what this Work, ostensibly, is all about! WARNING people and INSTRUCTING people about that coming event! That if we look for Him, “He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” And that means your salvation, and my salvation, and the salvation of everyone who has lived and died in Christ!

Notice **Hebrews chapter 10, verse 21** – “[A]nd *having* a High Priest over the house of God, ...” – that’s why I don’t understand the Roman religion. I don’t understand why they feel this need for a pope, and for priests. Because my friends, we have One! His name is Ιησοῦς Χριστός (Jesus Christ)! He sits on the right-hand side of God. And He is the One that will control our future! It says in **Verse 22** – “[L]et us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” – an illusion to the baptism. **Verse 23** – “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” – and there’s people that we know who are no longer with us. ... And we hear stories eventually of how they’ve gone *this* way, or *that* way. Or they’ve gotten infatuated with some self-appointed religious holy man, or some cause. And they have simply gone down a different path. And, why don’t they hold fast!? Well folks to all of you who read this, read the words of Paul – “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.” And **Verse 24** – “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works. **25**) not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting [encouraging] one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

So folks, to all of you please hang on! What was that song, “[Hang on Snoopy](#)”? How many remember that little song? Raise your hands. Well, that’s what Paul is saying to us! But we’re not Snoopy.

And then, **chapter 10, verse 35** – “Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. **36**) For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

37) *‘For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.’*”

Hebrews chapter 11, verse 8 – where it talks about Abraham, *this* promise. “By *faith* [by belief in God and God’s promises] Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. **9)** By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in [tabernacles] with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.” And notice **Verse 10** – “for he [and Isaac and Jacob] waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” And, verse 13 – again, I have to ask the question – for those people who believe what most people in the West believe – that you die and you go off to Heaven: If Abraham was the father of the faithful and is called in the Old Testament ‘a friend of God,’ why isn’t Abraham in Heaven right now!? Or, as the Book of Acts – King David, ‘a man after My own heart,’ and we’re told that his sepulchre is with us to this day. Notice what it says in **Verse 13** – “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” – and when we were keeping the Feast of Tabernacles a couple weeks ago, we also said that we are temporary beings in a temporary world – but we’re hanging on to permanent promises of eternal life! **Verse 14** – “For those who say such things, declare plainly that they seek a [country].” **Verse 16** – “But now they desire a better [country], that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.” – ‘a city!’ And back in the Book of Revelation, we read about that city!

Revelation chapter 21 - I’ve often said every chance I get to read this at a church service I do, because I love these verses. It is the epitome of what we’re all about! This is the G O A L! “**Seek you first the Kingdom of God!**” And this is what Revelation chapter 21 is talking about! **Verse 2** – “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3)** And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.’”

And I love verse 4 – I love verse 4 when I think about all the tragedies which occurred! The murders, the rapes, the suicides, the lives which are lost to the misuse of alcohol, narcotics. The damage and twisted lives, which many

times are all around us. Some of you may have relatives who have gone through horrible things!? Notice what God says here in **Verse 4** - “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. **5)** Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I will make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write for these Words are true and faithful.’ **6)** And He said to me, ‘It is done! I AM the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him [or her] who thirsts. **7)** He [or she] who overcomes shall inherit ALL THINGS, ...” – that was the promise to Abraham! That he would inherit eternity, and the earth, and all things! And the promise which was given to Abraham is also the very same promise which is given to you, and me, and people *like* us! And it says, “I will be [their] God and [they] shall by My [children].” Notice **Verse 22** – “But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. **23)** The city had no need of the Sun or of the Moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. **24)** And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. **25)** Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). **26)** And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. **27)** But there shall be no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” And then in **Chapter 22** we see this river running from the throne of God and the Lamb. **Verse 3** – “And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. **4)** They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. **5)** There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the Sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And *they* shall reign forever and ever.” – ‘THEY!’ That’s you, that’s me, that’s people like us, now, and down through the ages! ‘they shall reign forever and ever.’ **Verse 6** – “Then he said to me, ‘These Words are faithful and true.’ And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.” – I wonder just how short that time *really* is!? I have a feeling it’s much closer than we really understand!

Verse 7 – “Behold, I AM coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this Book.”

And then, notice **Verse 11** – “He who is unjust, ...” – there’s gonna come a time when Jesus is simply going to say, “If you’re going to reject Me and dispute Me and argue with Me, just stay that way! Remain unjust.” “let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.” **12)** ‘**And behold, I AM coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his [or her] work. 13)** I AM the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.’” **Verse 14** – “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.” And then notice **Verse 20** - “He who testifies to these things says, ‘**Surely I AM coming quickly.**’” And then, John said, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

And when I think about the events that are going on around us – some of which Mark referred to – that are on the horizon like a horrible storm waiting to come ashore. I think about those people down in [Galveston about a hundred years ago](#) that we heard so much about, when [Hurricane Ike](#) came ashore! They were just minding their own business, and just a few hours later they were inundated by many feet of water! Wind, storms, and many thousands were gone! They had no idea that a storm was just on the verge of wiping them and everything out! And so this nation, and our people are on the verge of having a storm run over them! And for most of them they’re not aware! And they don’t seem to care. They don’t want to hear the warning – and if you tell it to them, they’ll reject it! And only if God opens their heart and their mind do they understand what we so freely try to preach and live by and *hope* for.

Well my friends, the Kingdom of God is soon to return to this earth. ‘Hold fast that which you have.’ Let no man take your crown! And do the Work of God – individually, in your private lives, and collectively – by being part of the Body of Christ and doing *a* work. ... Keep on a keepin’ on – and you will be the recipient of *the* promise – the same promise that God gave Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. You are heirs to that same promise. To inherit everything and to inherit eternity.

May God bless all of you. May God bless the Work of God.

[Owensboro Church of Jesus Christ](#)

<http://www.owensborochurchofjesuschrist.com/>